



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
McDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING**

**March 7, 2013**

**Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park  
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** James Heitel, Chairman  
Fred Klein, Vice Chairman  
Susan Wheeler, Commissioner (arrived at 5:08 p.m.)  
Marg Nelssen, Commissioner  
Robert Frost, Commissioner  
Con Englehorn, Commissioner

**ABSENT:** Mike Milillo, Commissioner

**STAFF:** Bill Murphy  
Kroy Ekblaw  
Scott Hamilton  
Claire Miller  
Robbin Schweitzer

**GUESTS:** Mike Nolan  
David Hay  
Howard Myers  
John Sather  
Mary Jordan  
Bob Stapleton  
Doreen O'Connell  
Ed Quihuis

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Heitel called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of January 31, 2013

**COMMISSIONER FROST MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 31, 2013 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN, THE MOTION CARRIED WITH A VOTE OF FIVE (5) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER WHEELER WAS NOT YET PRESENT.**

**5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE** *(Presentation begins at 5:07; approximately 1 minute into the meeting.)*

Mr. Nolan gave an update on the activities of the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy including the steward patrols, maintenance hours, Pathfinders, and the hike program. He noted that the steward program has trained 115 new stewards so far this year in anticipation of the opening of the north areas.

**6. COMMERCIAL GUIDED TOURS - MOTORIZED** *(Discussion begins at 5:10; approximately 4 minutes into the meeting.)*

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the history of the jeep tours, the jeep tour companies' relationship with the City of Scottsdale, and restrictions placed on activities due to air quality requirements that led up to the City participating in trail maintenance through the SLUP. Since the City acquired the land, the rules of the Preserve apply, which means an amendment to the Preserve Ordinance would be required in order to allow motorized tours. The Preserve Director has given authority to the jeep tour operators to continue to operate through the end of May, but a more permanent solution needs to be in place for the jeep tour operations to continue after that date.

The following individuals spoke representing the jeep tour companies, discussing their commitment to stewardship and education about the Preserve and the City of Scottsdale's promise to grandfather the existing jeep tour companies once the land was acquired:

- Mary Jordan
- Doreen O'Connell
- Bob Stapleton

Discussion ensued regarding possible options that would allow the existing jeep tour companies to continue operating.

It was the consensus of the Commission to direct staff to consult with the legal department and explore options that would allow the existing jeep companies to continue operation.

Discussion continued about the specific trails used by the jeep tour companies.

**7. FUTURE ACQUISITION PRIORITIES** *(Discussion begins at 5:51; approximately 45 minutes into the meeting.)*

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the remaining prominent lands left for acquisition within the recommended study boundary. The areas were categorized by the Commission and approved by Council in 2009. He asked for input on whether or not the Commission was in agreement with the existing prioritization as set forth in 2009 or if they had recommendations based on the current status of the Preserve.

Commissioners were given the opportunity to make comments and recommended changes to the prioritization.

**8. DESERT DISCOVERY CENTER FEEDBACK FOR PHASE III COMMITTEE** *(Discussion begins at 6:12; approximately 1 hour and 6 minutes into the meeting.)*

Mr. Ekblaw noted that with the acquisition of the 2,400 acres this year, a substantial amount of the State Land and Preserve acquisitions will have been completed. It has been staff's expectation once this is achieved to move forward with initiation of a General Plan amendment to the Open Space Preserve category and zoning to Conservation Open Space District. The General Plan amendment and zoning change are part of a larger strategy that will add layers of protection.

Commissioners made comments regarding zoning and the opinion of the legal department related to the Desert Discovery Center.

Mr. Ekblaw gave an overview of the discussion at the last DDC Phase III Committee meeting, including the Committee's consideration of alternate locations and funding options for locations not in the Preserve. He distributed a questionnaire asking questions about the intensity and appropriate uses that could be included as part of the DDC and asked that Commissioners complete the questionnaire and to include any additional comments.

Howard Myers spoke about the reasons why the Desert Discovery Center should be located outside of the Preserve boundaries and suggested that the site at 94th Street and Bell would be the ideal location.

Commissioners were given the opportunity to make additional comments.

## **9. STAFF REPORTS**

- **Minutes** (*Discussion begins at 6:45; approximately 1 hour and 29 minutes into the meeting.*)

Mr. Murphy reviewed the City's policy on minutes, the Arizona State law requirements for posting of minutes, and he broke down the costs associated with various styles of minutes.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to make comments. Chair Heitel requested that efforts be made to timestamp the minutes to make it easier to find certain points in the audio recording.

**Scottsdale Leadership Principles for Civil Dialogue Initiative** (*Presentation begins at 6:54; approximately 1 hour and 48 minutes into the meeting.*)

Mr. Murphy noted that Cynthia Wenstrom from Scottsdale Leadership is scheduled to make a presentation at the April meeting, for possible adoption of Scottsdale Leadership Principles for Civil Dialogue.

**Project Updates** (*Presentation begins at 6:55; approximately 1 hour and 49 minutes into the presentation.*)

Mr. Murphy invited Commissioners to help place the plant identification signs at Tom's Thumb Trailhead on March 26th from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and at Sunrise Trail on April 2nd from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

**Commission Installation Project - Plants Signage at Sunrise Trailhead** (*Discussion begins at 6:56; approximately 1 hour and 50 minutes into the presentation.*)

Mr. Hamilton gave an update on the progress at the Brown's Ranch Trailhead and shared photographs of the recent activities. Trails work is in progress and should be completed prior to the trailhead opening. He noted that the Jane Rau trail has been cut in and the pedestrian bridge and interpretive signs are pending with an estimated trail opening during the opening of the Brown's Ranch Trailhead in October. The trail contractors will have approximately 50 miles of trails reconstructed by May, primarily in the area north of Brown's Ranch trailhead. Site planning and mapping of the area are underway.

Mr. Hamilton shared photographs of gating, fencing and boundary signs.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that City Council approved a SLUP near Pima and Dynamite. Gating and fencing will go in the next couple of months as soon as the paperwork is delivered to the State.

Mr. Hamilton noted that the Granite Mountain Trailhead should be completed in May or June and the Fraesfield Mountain Trailhead will be completed during the summer.

**10. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS** *(Item begins at 7:02; approximately 1 hour and 58 minutes into the meeting.)*

**A. Chairman's item for future consideration - Transit service to trailhead(s)**

Chair Heitel said that he was primarily concerned about providing transit for senior citizens the two interpretive trails at Gateway and Lost Dog.

Mr. Ekblaw noted that staff from transit services, community services, and adaptive recreation will provide input prior to a future meeting to discuss the history and cost of providing transportation to the interpretive trails.

**11. AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL 4, 2013**

- Transit Service to Trailhead(s)
- Scottsdale Leadership Principles for Civil Dialogue Initiative
- Future Acquisition Priorities
- Commercial Guided Tours - Motorized - Spring/Summer
- Future Land Cost Benefit Study Process - Spring/Summer

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.